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DEPARTMENT OF STATE
DIVISION OF BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

RAUFF, Walter

FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY

(The following biographic information on Rauff is based on SS personnel records on file in the Berlin Document Center)

Walter Rauff was born at Koethen in Anhalt on June 19, 1906, the son of a bank official. He spent his childhood and early youth in Magdeburg. In 1924, immediately after graduating from a Gymnasium, Rauff enlisted in the German Navy. He passed the officer candidate examinations three years later and was commissioned as an ensign in 1928. In 1930 he was promoted to lieutenant, j.g., and in 1935 he became a Kapitaenleutnant (lieutenant). Assigned to various ships in the course of his naval career, Rauff visited Spain, South and Central America, and the Scandinavian countries.

Rauff resigned from the Navy on December 31, 1937, for what he termed "personal reasons." In the fall of 1937 he had divorced his first wife. In autobiographical accounts Rauff creates the impression that he had divorced her because of her inability to have children, but another document in the file mentions adultery without, however, naming the guilty party, who may well have been Rauff, for he remarried a short time later, and his second wife, a woman eight years his senior, bore him a son only four months after the wedding.

Immediately after resigning from the Navy Rauff entered the employ of the Security Police (Sicherheitsdienst - SD, and Sicherheitspolizei - SiPo) of the Reichsfuehrer-SS. Rauff had joined the Nazi Party in May 1937; he became a member of the SS on September 1, 1938. He worked in the Reichssicherheitshauptamt (RSHA - Reich Security Main Office or Command) until the outbreak of World War II. In 1940 and 1941 he was on active military duty as commander of a fleet of mine-sweepers operating in the English Channel. He was discharged in April 1941 with the rank of lieutenant commander (Korvettenkapitaen) and deferred from military duty in order to serve with the Security Police. In 1942 he was assigned to a SiPo unit in Tunis and then transferred to Italy where he remained presumably until the end of World War II, working as a high secret police official. The highest rank he attained in the SS seems to have been that of SS-Standartenfuehrer (SS-colonel).

Rauff has two children -- one stepson only 14 years younger than himself and one son born in 1936. He has some knowledge of English and Spanish.

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